HERITAGE HOTELS

BRAIN THINK TANK | PARTICIPANT GUIDE | 26 NOVEMBER 2026

Your hotel has a history. Together, give Valletta a European heritage-hospitality identity.

Preserve the past. Elevate the experience. Unlock new value.

The opportunity

This Think Tank brings together Historic Hotels of Europe (HHE) leaders, Maltese heritage hotel operators and destination partners to understand the benefits of HHE membership and explore how Malta could become recognised as a heritage-hospitality destination, beginning with a coordinated Valletta pilot. The ambition goes beyond individual hotel membership: it is to create destination-wide synergies, shared experiences and a stronger international proposition.

The session will distinguish between membership of individual properties and any possible destination-level recognition or partnership with HHE. The precise form, eligibility, benefits and authority to grant destination recognition must be explored and confirmed with HHE; no such recognition is assumed.

What this Think Tank aims to achieve

- Understand Historic Hotels of Europe, the benefits and obligations of individual hotel membership, and the value it could create for Malta.
- Explore how Valletta could become a pilot heritage-hospitality destination associated with HHE, including what recognition or partnership would actually be possible.
- Identify destination-wide synergies among heritage hotels: shared storytelling, cultural routes, coordinated marketing, joint packages, referrals and knowledge exchange.
- Define how eligible Valletta hotels could engage with HHE individually while collaborating through a local destination network.
- Agree a preliminary Valletta pilot brief, interested properties, relevant public and private partners, and a pathway for possible expansion across Malta.

Programme — Thursday, 26 November | Hilton Malta

Time	Session
13:00	Networking lunch — Spinola Foyer
14:30–14:45	Welcome, introductions and purpose of the session
14:45–15:15	Historic Hotels of Europe: identity, membership and value proposition
15:15–15:50	Eligibility and readiness: what makes a property suitable?
15:50–16:20	Malta opportunity: interest, barriers and support required
16:20–16:45	Membership pathway, partnerships and

	proposed pilot cohort
16:45–17:00	Agreed actions, contacts and closing

Facilitator

Barbara Avdis — Vice Chairman, Historic Hotels of Europe; Founder and Managing Director, Yades Greek Historic Hotels. Barbara will facilitate the session and coordinate contributions from the Historic Hotels of Europe representatives.

Discussion themes

1. What does HHE membership offer — and to whom?

Clarify membership criteria, quality expectations, independent property benefits, marketing reach, access to heritage travellers, partnerships, costs and ongoing obligations.

2. Could Valletta be recognised as a heritage-hospitality destination?

Explore what destination-level collaboration, endorsement, promotion or recognition HHE could offer; what Valletta would need to demonstrate; and the role of tourism and heritage authorities.

3. What synergies can historic hotels create together?

Develop ideas for joint heritage storytelling, curated itineraries, shared cultural experiences, linked booking referrals, city-wide campaigns and partnerships with museums, guides and local businesses.

4. How should the Valletta pilot work?

Identify potential participating properties, a voluntary coordination mechanism, a common destination narrative, visitor benefits, HHE engagement and a practical pilot timeline.

5. How could the model extend across Malta?

Define a phased route from Valletta to other Maltese heritage destinations, with eligibility checks, destination partnerships, communications and clear responsibilities.

Questions to bring to the discussion

- What benefits of HHE membership would be most compelling for your property and for Valletta as a whole?
- What form of HHE recognition or partnership could be realistic for Valletta, and who would need to approve it?
- Which joint experiences, marketing activities or heritage routes could make participating hotels more attractive together?
- Which of the selected candidate Valletta hotels wish to explore HHE membership, and which cultural institutions, tourism authorities and local partners should support the pilot?
- What concrete pilot actions and decisions should be pursued in the first 90 days?

What we want to leave with

A shared understanding of HHE membership benefits; an initial shortlist of interested candidate hotels in Valletta; a proposal for hotel-to-hotel synergies and shared destination experiences; an outline of possible HHE destination collaboration; and a practical 90-day pathway with responsible partners and next steps.

Participation and preparation

The participant list is initial and provisional. In addition to Historic Hotels of Europe representatives, selected hotels from Valletta identified as potential candidates for HHE membership are invited to participate. Their individual names and properties will be confirmed as invitations are finalised; no hotel is represented as already approved or accepted by HHE. Participation may change or expand to include other interested historic hotel owners and operators, tourism and heritage authorities, cultural partners and destination stakeholders.

Appendix A — Initial participants and short profiles

Professional descriptions below are based on the roles provided for the session. Individual titles and affiliations should be confirmed before external publication.

Participant	Role / contribution
Barbara Avdis — Facilitator	Vice Chairman, Historic Hotels of Europe; Founder and Managing Director, Yades Greek Historic Hotels. Brings heritage-hotel management and European network experience.
Ken Healy	Chairman, Historic Hotels of Europe. Offers leadership perspective on the association's positioning, membership and international priorities.
Robert Chestnutt	Historic Hotels of Europe representative. Specific title and responsibilities to be confirmed.
Aidan MacManus	Historic Hotels of Europe representative. Specific title and responsibilities to be confirmed.
Claudia Buscher	Historic Hotels of Europe representative. Specific title and responsibilities to be confirmed.
Selected Valletta heritage hotels — invited candidates (names to be confirmed)	Owners and/or senior representatives of selected historic hotels in Valletta identified as potential candidates for Historic Hotels of Europe membership. They will assess eligibility and membership benefits, and explore shared promotion, heritage experiences and a Valletta destination pilot. Inclusion is not confirmation of eligibility, acceptance or membership.

Frequently asked questions

Is this only about individual hotel membership?

No. Individual membership is one component. The central ambition is to explore a coordinated Valletta heritage-hospitality pilot and destination-wide synergies, with potential to extend across Malta.

Will Valletta automatically receive recognition from HHE?

No. Any destination recognition, affiliation or joint promotion would need to be discussed and agreed with HHE. The Think Tank will explore feasibility, not confer a designation.

Do hotels need to be members already?

No. Interested hotels and destination partners can use the session to understand HHE membership and consider participating in a Valletta pilot.

Are fees, recognition criteria and partnership terms already agreed?

No. Membership conditions and any destination-level partnership or recognition arrangements must be confirmed directly with HHE.

Appendix B — Working worksheets

Worksheet 1 | HHE membership benefits and destination value

Prompt	Notes
Potential HHE membership benefits	
Value to Valletta as a destination	
International heritage traveller appeal	
Possible HHE partnership/recognition (to verify)	
Hotels and partners interested	
Key unanswered questions	

Worksheet 2 | Valletta pilot and shared heritage experiences

Area	Evidence / questions / next action
Pilot geography and initial hotels	
Shared heritage story and destination identity	
Heritage routes, cultural experiences and packages	
Joint marketing, referrals and visitor information	
Roles for tourism and heritage authorities	
Success indicators and pilot timetable	

Worksheet 3 | Destination recognition pathway and action plan

Next step	Lead / partner	Target timing
Clarify HHE destination-level options	HHE representatives	
Invite Valletta hotels to express interest	MTF / hotel partners	
Convene tourism and heritage partners	MTF / relevant authorities	

Develop shared pilot proposition	Interested hotels / partners
Agree feasibility review and next meeting	Facilitator / nominated leads

Facilitator consolidation sheet

Top three membership benefits and destination-wide opportunities:

_____

_____

Questions to confirm with HHE on destination recognition or partnership:

_____

_____

Potential Valletta pilot hotels, cultural partners and public bodies:

_____

_____

Proposed shared marketing, heritage routes and collaborative experiences:

_____

_____

Next steps, named owners and a date to reconvene with HHE:

_____

_____

Preserve the past. Elevate the experience. Unlock new value.